

# **Election Official Training Improvements**

**Ann Hypes**

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## **Taxonomy**

The threat of maintaining the Status Quo election official training will continue the current election process that:

- a. Is unable to identify Election Day errors.
- b. Opens the door for election fraud.

This threat will decrease Voter Confidence and Voter Turnout.

And in turn, will cause the American Election process to produce un-representative selections and make the American Election process less credible.

## **Applicability**

The applicability is applied to all voting systems.

## **Attack Method**

**I.** Current Election Official training has been adequate for many years. It is evident that there have been numerous hours, resources, and efforts put forth in training, reviewing, and hiring election officials. However, election processes are changing and it is time to update the core of our election process; our election officials training.

Currently Voters view Election Officers as ‘part-time’ non-authoritative poll workers. This causes high risk of opportunity for errors and voter fraud.

An Election Official is an Election Law Enforcement Officer. Not all election officials know the election law.

- 1) The election officer should enforce the election law by:
  - a. Understanding the law.
  - b. Having Rules and Responsibilities identified and assigned for each Election Officer.
  - c. Enforcing the law as a TEAM in a professional manner.
  - d. Having an election day GOAL Identified.

### Election Day Examples of Issues:

- a) With the many types of ballots; Provisional Ballots, Absentee Ballots, spoiled Ballots; over-votes and under-votes may be correctly or incorrectly counted or eliminated by confusion of the voter or election official.
- b) Persons may be coming in to vote twice (name changes), or at multiple voting locations, or issued multiple ballots mistakenly given to the voter by an under-trained Election Officer.
- c) Voting Booths may have propaganda left inside which may influence the next voter.
- d) Election Officials put in long 5am through 9pm, or later, hours with little to no breaks. Fatigue will cause a lack of ability to catch voter discrepancies or potential voter fraud. There are provisions in the law to allow part-time election-day officers, not to just have officers that work the whole day.

Well-intentioned Election Officers sworn to uphold the election law, cannot be blamed for election-day errors or fraud if they are not given the training, authority, direction, and responsibility to act as a law enforcement officer.

**II.** Use of 3<sup>rd</sup> party professionals to track, audit, and report Election Day events. There is no one at this time looking at the whole election process from the outside (or inside) and coordinating with the Election Board.

If there are no errors found and no fraud currently reported, does this mean there is no errors or fraud? No, just that there is no coordinated effort to collect and identify anything at this time.

## Resource Requirements and Costs

Election Officers properly trained with knowledge of the election laws, election-day tools, and defined responsibilities can be alert to many Election Day fraud attempts.

- Cost can be the same as current training costs.

A key resource to this concern is 3<sup>rd</sup> party professional audits. These professionals can perform spot checks on several precincts to identify continuous improvements that can be shared across many locations.

- Cost can be determined by efficiency increases; determining the best fit equipment for a specific precinct, using less number of persons to run an election, and by producing more accurate vote counts which eliminate the need for re-counts.

## Consequences and Potential Gain

Destroying voter confidence and decreasing voter turnout will make the American election process appear less representative of the American Citizen, which in turn will give the American Election Process little credibility.

Just the appearance of positive change will change the Voter perception, increasing voter confidence and voter turnout. This will give tremendous credibility to the American election process.

## Likelihood of Detection

The likelihood of detection depends on the degree of independent professional 3<sup>rd</sup> party audits performed and reports, generated through the Election Board, distributed to the public. Detection increases as more audits and continuous improvements are made. These audits will review all aspects of the election process...not just the equipment.

## Countermeasures

### Preventative Measures

Election Official Training Improvements will;

- Prevent Election Official uncertainty about the Election Law, which will give the election process credibility.
- Prevent unreliable vote counts, which will decrease the need for re-counts in close elections. The margin for error will decrease.
- Prevent voter uncertainty about ballots markings, which will make the votes reflect the intent of all voters. Election Day voter instruction will be clear and voters will become more confident about the voting process.
- Prevent poll-book errors, which will make the election process more efficient and voters lines move along more quickly. Poll-book officers will have a better understanding of the election law and reasons for the poll-book markings.

Professional 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors will;

- Prevent errors and election fraud from the lessons-learned in audits taken from one precinct and shared with other precincts in the following training sessions.
- Prevent low voter confidence and turnout, because of concise communication by the Election Board from the positive audit results performed by independent professionals.

## **Detection Measures**

Detection must be based on professional 3<sup>rd</sup> party audits to identify issues, report them, and coordinate them with the Election Board. Detection is most revealing when seen from the outside looking in, done in a professional manner, without judgment or accusation. Sticking with the facts, Parato charts can highlight areas of most opportunities and biggest impact for improvements. All reporting to the citizens would be handled through the Election Boards.

## **Citations and References**

There are no current papers on modifying the election officer training program or including professional 3<sup>rd</sup> party audits as proposed.

There is a movement beginning to penetrate through the election community that will identify the need for this work. Good information is being accumulated in coordination with the Usability Professional Association (UPA) at [www.usabilityprofessionals.org](http://www.usabilityprofessionals.org) and the Election Assistant Committee (EAC). This is a positive step toward useful changes in the election process.

## **Retrospective and Historical Notes**

The American Election Process is the best in the world.

As other countries' election processes are studied and assessed, there is similar equipment being used world-wide as in the US and not one voting system stands alone as the best. Standardizing the election process and election systems (equipment) does not appear to be a good solution. Some equipment works best in some precincts for specific reasons. Some ballots can be argued for similar reasons.

Voter Education, Election Officer Training, internal and outside audits will allow the Election PROCESS as a whole to be evaluated and continuously improved at the same time as cutting costs and improving efficiency of the equipment and the voters.